A SERMON

Preached before the

COURT

AT

CHRIST-CHURCH Chappel

IN

OXFORD.

BY

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LONDON:

Printed for *William Nott.*

1665.

Imprimatur

Robertus Say,

Vice-Cancellarius *Oxon.*

To the Right Honorable

EDWARD

EARL of

CLARENDON,

Lord High Chancellor of *England*,
and Chancellor of the University of *Oxon*,
and one of His Majesties most Honorable Privy Council.

My Lord,

Hough to prefix so great a Name to so mean a Piece, seems like enlarging the Entrance of an House that affords no Reception; yet since there is nothing can warrant the Publication of it, but what can also Command it; the Work must think of no other Patronage, then the same that adorns and protects its Author. Some indeed vouch great names, because they think they deserve, but I, because I need such; and had I not more occasion then many others, to see and converse with, your Lordships candor and proneness to Pardon, there is none had greater cause to dread your Judgment; and thereby in some part I venture to commend my own: For all know, who know your Lordship, that in a nobler respect then either that of Government or Patronage, you represent and Head the best of Universities; and have travelled over too many

Nations and Authors, to encourage any one that underſtands himſelf, to appear an Author in your hands; who ſeldom read any Books to inform your ſelf, but onely to countenance and credit them. But, my Lord, what is here publiſhed, pretends no Inſtruction, but onely Homage; while it teaches many of the World, it onely deſcribes your Lordſhip: Who have made the ways of Labor and Vertue, of doing, and doing good, your buſineſs and your recreation, your meat and your drink; and I may add alſo, your ſleep. My Lord, the ſubject here treated of, is of that Nature, that it would ſeem but a Chimera, and a bold Paradox, did it not in the very Front carry an inſtance to exemplifie it; and ſo by the Dedication convince the World, that the Diſcourſe it ſelf was not impracticable: For ſuch ever was, and is, and will be the temper of the generality of mankinde, that while I ſend Men for Pleaſure, to Religion, I cannot but expect, that they will look upon me, as onely having a minde to be pleaſant with them my ſelf; nor are Men to be worded into new tempers or conſtitutions: And he that thinks, that any one can perſwade, but He that made the World, will finde that he does not well underſtand it.

My Lord, I have obeyed your Command, for ſuch muſt I account your deſire, and thereby deſign not ſo much the Publication of my Sermon, as of my Obedience; for, next to the Supream Pleaſure deſcribed in the enſuing Diſcourſe, I enjoy none greater, then in having any opportunity to declare my ſelf,

Your Lordſhips very humble Servant,
and obliged Chaplain,

Robert South.

A SERMON PREACHED AT COURT, &c.

PROVERBS 3. 17.

Her Wayes are Wayes of Pleaſantneſs.

THe Text relating to ſomething going before, muſt carry our Eye back to the 13 *verſe*, where we ſhall find, that the thing, of which theſe words are affirmed, is Wiſdome: A Name by which the Spirit of God was here pleaſed to expreſs to us Religion, and thereby to tell the world, what before it was not aware of, and perhaps will not yet believe, that thoſe two great things

that ſo engroſs the deſires and deſignes of both the Nobler and Ignobler ſort of mankind, are to be found in Religion ; namely, *Wiſdom* and *Pleaſure* ; and that the former is the direct way to the latter, as Religion is to Both.

That Pleaſure is mans chiefeſt good, (becauſe indeed it is the perception of Good that is properly pleaſure) is an aſſertion moſt certainly true, though under the common acceptance of it, not only falſe, but odious : for according to this, pleaſure and ſenſuality paſs for termes equivalent : and therefore, he that takes it in this ſence, alters the Subject of the diſcourſe. Senſuality is indeed a part, or rather one kind of pleaſure, ſuch an one as it is. For Pleaſure in general, is the conſequent apprehenſion of a ſutable Object, ſutably applied to a rightly diſpoſed faculty ; and ſo muſt be converſant, both about the faculties of the Body, and of the Soul reſpectively ; as being the reſult of the fruitions belonging to Both.

Now amongſt thoſe many Arguments, uſed to preſs upon men the exerciſe of Religion, I know none that are like to be ſo ſucceſsful,

as

as thoſe that anſwer, and remove the prejudices that generally poſſeſs, and barr up the Hearts of men againſt it: amongſt which, there is none ſo prevalent in Truth, though ſo little owned in Pretence, as that it is an Enemy to mens pleaſures, that it bereaves them of all the ſweets of Converſe, dooms them to an abſurd and perpetual Melancholy, deſigning to make the world nothing elſe but a great Monaſtery. With which notion of Religion, Nature and Reaſon ſeem to have great cauſe to be diſſatisfied. For ſince God never Created any faculty, either in Soul or Body, but withal prepared for it a ſutable object, and that in order to its gratification; can we think that Religion was deſigned only for a Contradiction to Nature? and with the greateſt and moſt irrational Tyranny in the World to Tantalize, and tie men up from enjoyment, in the midſt of all the opportunities of enjoyment? to place men with the furious affections of hunger, and thirſt in the very boſome of Plenty; and then to tell them that the envy of Providence has ſealed up every thing that is *ſutable* under the

Character of *Unlawful*? For certainly, firſt to frame appetites fit to receive pleaſure, and then to interdict them with a *Touch not*, *taſte not*, can be nothing elſe, then only to give them occaſion to devour, and prey upon themſelves; and ſo to keep men under the perpetual Torment of an unſatisfied Deſire: a thing hugely contrary to the natural felicity of the Creature, and conſequently to the wiſdom, and goodneſs of the great Creator.

He therefore that would perſwade men to Religion, both with Art and efficacy, muſt found the perſwaſion of it upon this, that it interferes not with any rational pleaſure; that it bids no body quit the enjoyment of any one thing that his Reaſon can prove to him, ought to be enjoyed. 'Tis confeſſed, when through the croſs circumſtances of a mans temper or condition, the Enjoyment of a pleaſure would certainly expoſe him to a greater inconvenience, then Religion bids him quit it; that is, it bids him prefer the endurance of a leſſer evil before a greater; and Nature it ſelf does no leſs. Religion therefore intrenches upon none of our Priviledges, invades none of our Plea-

Pleaſures; it may indeed ſometimes command us to *change*, but never totally to *abjure* them.

But it is eaſily foreſeen, that this Diſcourſe will in the very beginning of it be encountred by an Argument from Experience, and therefore not more obvious then ſtrong; namely, that it cannot but be the greateſt trouble in the world for a man thus (as it were) to ſhake off himſelf, and to defie his Nature, by a perpetual thwarting of his innate Appetites and Deſires; which yet is abſolutely neceſſary to a ſevere and impartial proſecution of a Courſe of Piety: nay, and we have this aſſerted alſo, by the Verdict of Chriſt himſelf, who ſtill makes the Diſciplines of ſelf-denial and the Croſs, thoſe terrible blows to fleſh and blood, the indiſpenſable requiſites to the being of his Diſciples. All which being ſo, would not he that ſhould be ſo hardy as to attempt to perſwade men to Piety from the pleaſures of it, be lyable to that invective taunt from all mankinde, that the Iſraelites gave to *Moſes*; *Wilt thou put out the eyes of this People?* Wilt thou perſwade us out of our firſt Notions? Wilt thou demonſtrate,

monſtrate, that there is any delight in a Croſs, any comfort in Violent abridgments; and, which is the higheſt Paradox of all, that the higheſt pleaſure is to abſtain from it?

For anſwer to which, it muſt be confeſt, that all Arguments whatſoever againſt Experience are fallacious; and therefore in order to the clearing of the Aſſertion laid down, I ſhall premiſe theſe two Conſiderations.

1. That Pleaſure is in the Nature of it a Relative thing, and ſo imports a peculiar Relation and Correſpondence to the ſtate and condition of the Perſon to whom it is a Pleaſure. For as thoſe who Diſcourſe of Atoms affirm that there are Atoms of all forms, ſome round, ſome triangular, ſome ſquare, and the like; all which are continually in motion, and never ſettle till they fall into a fit circumſcription or place of the ſame figure: So there are the like great diverſities of Mindes and Objects; whence it is, that this Object ſtriking upon a minde thus and thus diſpoſed, flies off, and rebounds without making any impreſſion; but the ſame luckily hapning upon another of a Diſpoſition as it were framed for it, is preſently

ſently catcht at, and greedily claſped into the neareſt Unions and Embraces.

2. The other thing tobe conſidered, is this, That the Eſtate of all men by Nature is more or leſs different from that Eſtate, into which, the ſame perſons do, or may paſs by the exerciſe of that which the Philoſophers called Virtue, and into which men are much more effectually and ſublimely tranſlated by that which we call Grace; that is, by the ſupernatural overpowring operation of Gods Spirit. The difference of which two eſtates conſiſts in this; that in the former the ſenſitive appetites rule and domineer; in the latter the Supream faculty of the Soul, called Reaſon, ſways the Scepter, and acts the whole man above the irregular demands of Appetite and Affection.

That the diſtinction between theſe two is not a meer figment, framed only to ſerve an Hypotheſis in Divinity; and that there is no man but is really under one, before he is under the other, I ſhall prove, by ſhewing a Reaſon why it is ſo, or rather indeed why it cannot but be ſo. And it is this: Becauſe every man

man in the beginning of his life, for ſeveral years is capable only of exerciſing his ſenſitive faculties and deſires, the uſe of Reaſon not ſhewing it ſelf till about the Seventh Year of his Age, and then at length but (as it were) dawning in very imperfect Eſſays and Diſcoveries. Now it being moſt undeniably evident that every Faculty and Power grows ſtronger and ſtronger by exerciſe; is it any wonder at all, when a man for the ſpace of his firſt ſix years, and thoſe the years of ductility and impreſſion, has been wholly ruled by the propenſions of ſence, at that age very eager and impetuous; that then after all, his Reaſon beginning to exert and put forth it ſelf, finds the man prepoſſeſs'd and under another power? ſo that it has much adoe by many little ſteps, and gradual conqueſts, to recover its prerogative from the uſurpations of appetite, and ſo to ſubject the whole man to its Dictates: the difficulty of which is not conquered by ſome men all their dayes. And this is one true ground of the Difference between a ſtate of Nature, and a ſtate of Grace, which ſome are pleaſed to ſcoff at in Divinity, who think that

that they confute all that they laugh at, not knowing that it may be ſolidly evinced by meer Reaſon and Philoſophy.

Theſe two conſiderations being premiſed, namely, That Pleaſure implyes a proportion and agreement to the reſpective States and Conditions of men; and that the ſtate of men by Nature is vaſtly different from that eſtate into which Grace or Vertue tranſplants them; all that Objection levelled againſt the foregoing Aſſertion is very eaſily reſolvable.

For there is no doubt, but a man, while he reſignes himſelf up to the Brutiſh guidance of ſence and appetite, has no reliſh at all for the Spiritual, refined delights of a Soul Clarifyed by Grace and Vertue. The pleaſures of an Angel can never be the pleaſures of a Hogg. But this is the thing that we contend for; that a man having once advanced himſelf to a ſtate of Superiority over the Control of his inferior Appetites, finds an infinitely more ſolid and ſublime pleaſure in the Delights proper to his Reaſon, then the ſame perſon had ever conveyed to him by the bare miniſtry of his Senſes. His taſte is abſolutely changed, and there-

fore that which pleaſed him formerly, becomes flat and inſipid, to his Appetite now grown more Maſculine and ſevere. For as age and maturity paſſes a real and a marvellous Change upon the Dyet and recreations of the ſame perſon; ſo that no man at the Years and Vigour of thirty, is either fond of Sugarplums or Rattles: In like manner, when Reaſon, by the aſſiſtance of Grace, has prevailed over, and outgrown the encroachments of Sence, the delights of Senſuality are to ſuch an one but as an Hobby-horſe would be to a Councellor of State; or as taſteleſs, as a bundle of Hay to a hungry Lion. Every alteration of a mans Condition infallibly infers an alteration of his Pleaſures.

The Athenians laught the Phyſiognomiſt to Scorn, who pretending to read mens minds in their foreheads, deſcribed *Socrates* for a crabbed, luſtful, proud, ill-natured Perſon; they knowing how directly contrary he was to that dirty Character. But *Socrates* bid them forbear laughing at the man; for that he had given them a moſt exact account of his nature; but what they ſaw in him ſo contrary at the preſent,

ſent, was from the conqueſt that he had got over his Natural diſpoſition by Philoſophy. And now let any one conſider, whether that *Anger*, that *Revenge*, that *Wantonneſs* and *Ambition*, that were the proper pleaſures of *Socrates*, under his Natural temper of *crabbed*, *luſtfull*, and *proud*, could have at all affected or enamoured the mind of the ſame *Socrates*, made gentle, chaſte and humble by Philoſophy.

Ariſtotle ſays, that were it poſſible to put a Young mans eye into an Old mans head, he would ſee as plainly and clearly as the other; ſo could we infuſe the inclinations and principles of a Vertuous perſon into him that proſecutes his debauches with the greateſt Keeneſs of deſire, and ſence of Delight, he would loath and reject them as heartily, as he now purſues them. *Diogenes* being asked at a Feaſt, why he did not continue eating as the reſt did, anſwered him, that asked him, with another queſtion, Pray why do you eat? Why ſays he, for my pleaſure; why ſo, ſays *Diogenes*, do I abſtain for my pleaſure; and therefore the Vain, the Vitious and Luxurious perſon argues at an high rate of inconſequence, when he

makes his particular desires, the general measure of other mens delights. But the case is so plain, that I shall not upbraid any mans understanding by endeavouring to give it any farther Illustration.

But still, after all, I must not deny that the change and passage from a state of Nature, to a state of Vertue, is laborious, and consequently irksome and unpleasant: and to this it is, that all the forementioned expressions of our Saviour do allude. But surely the baseness of one condition, and the generous excellency of the other is a sufficient Argument to induce any one to a change. For as no man would think it a desireable thing, to preserve the Itch upon himself, only for the Pleasure of Scratching, that attends that loathsome distemper; so neither can any man, that would be faithful to his Reason, yield his Ear to be bored through by his domineering appetites, and so choose to serve them for ever, only for those poor, thin gratifications of sensuality that they are able to reward him with. The ascent up the hill is hard and tedious; but the serenity and fair prospect at the Top, is sufficient

to

to incite the Labour of undertaking it, and to reward it being undertook. But the difference of theſe two conditions of men, as the foundation of their different pleaſures, being thus made out; to preſs men with arguments to paſs from one to the other, is not directly in the way, or deſign of this Diſcourſe.

Yet before I come to declare poſitively the pleaſures that are to be found in the *wayes* of Religion: one of the grand duties of which is ſtated upon Repentance; a thing expreſſed to us by the grim names of Mortification, Crucifixion, and the like: and that I may not proceed onely upon abſolute Negations, without ſome Conceſſions; we will ſee, whether this ſo harſh, diſmal, and affrighting duty of Repentance is ſo entirely Gall, as to admit of no mixture, no allay of ſweetneſs, to reconcile it to the Apprehenſions of Reaſon and Nature.

Now Repentance conſiſts properly of two things;

1. Sorrow for Sin.
2. Change of Life.

A word briefly of them both.

1. And

1. And first, For *Sorrow for Sin:* Usually, the Sting of Sorrow is this, that it neither removes nor alters the thing we sorrow for; and so is but a kinde of reproach to our Reason, which will be sure to accost us with this *Dilemma*; either the thing, we sorrow for, is to be remedied, or it is not: If it is, why then do we spend the time in mourning, which should be spent in an active applying of Remedies? but if it is not; then is our Sorrow, Vain and Superfluous, as tending to no real Effect. For no man can weep his Father or his Friend out of the Grave, or mourn himself out of a Bankrupt condition. But this Spiritual Sorrow is effectual to one of the greatest and highest Purposes, that mankind can be concerned in. It is a means to avert an impendent wrath; to disarm an offended Omnipotence; and even to fetch a Soul out of the very Jaws of Hell. So that the End and Consequence of this Sorrow, sweetens the sorrow it self: And as *Solomon* says, *In the midst of laughter, the heart is sorrowful.* So in the midst of sorrow here, the heart may rejoyce; for while it mourns, it reads, That *those that mourn*

shall

ſhall be comforted; and ſo while the Penient weeps with one Eye, he views his Deliverance with the other. But then for the External Expreſſions, and vent of Sorrow; we know that there is a certain pleaſure in weeping; it is the diſcharge of a big and a ſwelling grief, of a full and a ſtrangling diſcontent: and therefore he that never had ſuch a burden upon his heart, as to give him opportunity thus to eaſe it, hath one pleaſure in this *World* yet to come.

2. As for the other part of Repentance, which is change of life; this indeed may be troubleſome in the Entrance; but it is but the firſt bold onſet, the firſt reſolute Violence and invaſion upon a vitious habit, that is ſo ſharp and afflicting. Every impreſſion of the Lancet Cuts, but it is the firſt onely that ſmarts. Beſides, it is an Argument hugely unreaſonable, to plead the Pain of paſſing *from* a Vitious Eſtate, unleſs it were proved, that there was none in the continuance *under* it: But ſurely, when we read of the *Service*, the *Bondage*, and the *Captivity* of *Sinners*, we are not entertain'd onely with the Air of Words and Metaphors; and inſtead of Truth, put off with

Simili-

Similitudes. Let him that ſays it is a trouble to refrain from a Debauch, convince us, that it is not a greater to undergo one;and that the Confeſſor did not impoſe a ſhrewd Pennance upon the drunken man,by bidding him go and be drunk again;and that liſping,raging, redneſs of eies,and what is not fit to be named in ſuch an Audience,is not more toilſom,then to be clean, and quiet, and diſcreet, and reſpected for being ſo.All the trouble that is in it, is the trouble of being ſound, being cured, and being recovered. But if there be great arguments for Health, then certainly there are the ſame for the obtaining of it ; and ſo keeping a due proportion between Spirituals and Temporals, we neither have, nor pretend to greater Arguments for Repentance.

Having thus now, cleared off all, that by way of Objection can lie againſt the Truth aſſerted, by ſhowing the proper Qualifications of the Subject, to whom onely the *ways of Wiſdom*, can be *ways of Pleaſantneſs* ; for the further proſecution of the matter in hand, I ſhall ſhow what are thoſe properties that ſo peculiarly ſet off,and enhance the Excellency of this Pleaſure. 1. The

1. The first is, That it is the proper pleasure of that part of man, which is the largest and most comprehensive of Pleasure, and that is his mind: a substance of a boundless comprehension. The mind of man is an Image, not only of Gods Spirituality, but of his Infinity. It is not like any of the Sences, limited to this or that kind of object: as the sight intermeddles not with that which affects the smel; but with an universal superintendence; it arbitrates upon, and takes them in, all. It is (as I may so say) an Ocean, into which all the little Rivulets of Sensation, both External and Internal, discharge themselves. It is framed by God to receive all and more then Nature can afford it; and so to be its own motive to seek for something above Nature. Now this is that part of man to which the Pleasures of Religion properly belong: and that in a double respect.

1. In reference to Speculation, as it sustains the name of Understanding.

2. In reference to Practice, as it sustains the name of Conscience.

1. And first for speculation: the pleasures

of which have been ſometimes ſo great, ſo intenſe, ſo ingroſſing of all the Powers of the Soul, that there hath been no room left for any other Pleaſure. It hath ſo called together all the Spirits to that one work, that there hath been no ſupply to carry on the Inferior operations of Nature. Contemplation feels no Hunger, nor is ſenſible of any Thirſt, but of that after knowledge. How frequent and exalted a Pleaſure did *David* find from his Meditation in the Divine Law! *All the day long*, it was the theam of his Thoughts: The affairs of State, the government of his Kingdom might indeed *employ*, but it was this onely that *refreſhed* his Minde.

How ſhort of this are the delights of the Epicure! how vaſtly diſproportionate are the Pleaſures of the Eating, and of the Thinking Man! Indeed, as different as the ſilence of an *Archimedes* in the ſtudy of a Problem, and the ſtilneſs of a Sow at her Waſh. Nothing is comparable to the pleaſure of an active and a prevailing thought: A thought prevailing over the difficulty and obſcurity of the object, and refreſhing the Soul with new diſcoveries,

and

and images of things; and thereby extending the bounds of Apprehenſion, and (as it were) enlarging the territories of Reaſon.

Now this pleaſure of the Speculation of Divine things, is advanced upon a double account.

1. The Greatneſs.
2. The newneſs of the Object.

1. And firſt for the greatneſs of it. It is no leſs then the Great God himſelf, and that both in his Nature, and his Works. For the Eye of Reaſon, like that of the Eagle, directs it ſelf chiefly to the Sun, to a glory that neither admits of a Superior, nor an Equal. Religion carries the Soul to the ſtudy of every Divine Attribute.

It poſes it with the amazing thoughts of Omnipotence; of a Power able to fetch up ſuch a glorious fabrick as this of the World, out of the abyſs of Vanity and Nothing, and able to throw it back into the ſame Original Nothing again. It drowns us in the ſpeculation of the Divine Omniſcience, that can maintain a ſteady infallible comprehenſion of all events in themſelves contingent and accidental; and

certainly know that, which does not certainly exiſt. It confounds the greateſt ſubtilties of Speculation, with the Riddles of Gods Omnipreſence; that can ſpread a ſingle Individual ſubſtance through all ſpaces; and yet without any commenſuration of parts *to* any, or circumſcription *within* any, though totally in every one. And then for his Eternity; which nonpluſſes the ſtrongeſt and the cleareſt Conception, to comprehend how one ſingle Act of Duration, ſhould meaſure all Periods and Portions of time without any of the diſtinguiſhing parts of Succeſſion. Likewiſe for his Juſtice; which ſhall prey upon the ſinner for ever, ſatisfying it ſelf by a perpetual Miracle, rendring the Creature immortal in the midſt of the flames; always conſuming, but never conſumed. With the like wonders, we may entertain our Speculations from his Mercy; his Beloved, his Triumphant Attribute; an Attribute, if it were poſſible, ſomething more then Infinite; for even his Juſtice is ſo, and his Mercy tranſcends that. Laſtly, we may contemplate upon his ſupernatural, aſtoniſhing works; particularly in the

the Reſurrection, and reparation of the ſame numerical Body, by a reunion of all the ſcattered Parts, to be at length diſpoſed of into an eſtate of Eternal wo or bliſs; as alſo the greatneſs and ſtrangeneſs of the Beatifick Viſion; how a created Eye ſhould be ſo fortified, as to bear all thoſe Glories that ſtream from the Fountain of uncreated Light; the meaneſt expreſſion of which Light, is, that it is unexpreſſible. Now what great and high Objects are theſe for a Rational Contemplation to buſie it ſelf upon! Heights that ſcorn the reach of our Proſpect; and Depths in which the talleſt Reaſon will never touch the Bottom: Yet ſurely, the pleaſure ariſing from thence is Great and Noble; for as much, as they afford perpetual matter and employment to the inquiſitiveneſs of Humane Reaſon; and ſo are large enough, for it to take its full ſcope and range in. Which when it hath ſucked and dreined the utmoſt of any Object, naturally lays it aſide, and neglects it as a dry and an empty thing.

2. As the things belonging to Religion, entertain our Speculation with great Objects, ſo

ſo they entertain it alſo with new. And novelty we know is the great Parent of pleaſure; upon which account it is, that men are ſo much pleaſed with Variety, and Variety is nothing elſe but a continued Novelty. The *Athenians*, who were the profeſt and moſt diligent Improvers of their Reaſon, made it their whole buſineſs *to hear or to tell ſome new thing:* For the truth is, Newneſs, eſpecially in great matters, was a worthy entertainment for a ſearching minde; it was (as I may ſo ſay) an high taſte fit for the reliſh of an *Athenian Reaſon.* And thereupon the meer unheard of ſtrangeneſs of *Jeſus*, and the Reſurrection, made them deſirous to hear it diſcourſed of to them again, 17 *Acts* 23. But how would it have employed their ſearching Faculties, had the Myſtery of the Trinity, and the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the whole Oeconomy of Mans Redemption, been explained to them! For how could it ever enter into the thoughts of Reaſon, that a ſatisfaction could be paid to an infinite Juſtice? Or, that two Natures ſo unconceivably different, as the Humane and Divine, could unite

unite into one perſon? The knowledge of theſe things could derive from nothing elſe but pure Revelation, and conſequently muſt be purely *New* to the higheſt diſcourſes of meer Nature. Now that the Newneſs of an Object ſo exceedingly pleaſes and ſtrikes the minde, appears from this one conſideration, That every thing pleaſes more in expectation then fruition, and expectation ſuppoſes a thing as yet new: The hoped for diſcovery of which, is the Pleaſure that entertains the expecting and enquiring minde; whereas actual diſcovery (as it were) rifles and deflours the Newneſs and Freſhneſs of the object, and ſo for the moſt part makes it Cheap, Familiar, and Contemptible.

It is cleer therefore, that if there be any pleaſure to the mind from ſpeculation; and if this pleaſure of ſpeculation be advanced by the greatneſs and newneſs of the things contemplated upon; all this is to be found in the wayes of Religion.

2. In the next place, Religion is a Pleaſure to the mind, as it reſpects Practice, and ſo ſuſtains the Name of Conſcience. And Conſcience

ſcience undoubtedly is the great Repoſitory and Magazine of all thoſe pleaſures that can afford any ſolid refreſhment to the Soul. For when this is calm, and ſerene, and abſolving, then properly a man enjoys all things, and what is more, Himſelf; for that he muſt do, before he can enjoy any thing elſe. But it is only a Pious life, led exactly by the rules of a ſevere Religion, that can authorize a mans Conſcience to ſpeak comfortably to him; It is this that muſt word the ſentence, before the Conſcience can pronounce it; and then it will do it with Majeſty and Authority; It will not whiſper, but proclaim a Jubilee to the mind. It will not drop, but pour in oile upon the wounded heart. And is there any pleaſure comparable to that which ſprings from hence! The Pleaſure of Conſcience is not only greater then all other Pleaſures, but may alſo ſerve inſtead of them: for they only pleaſe and affect the mind *in Tranſitu*, in the pittiful narrow compaſs of actual fruition; whereas that of Conſcience entertains and feeds it a long time after with durable, laſting reflections.

And

And thus much for the first ennobling property of the Pleasure belonging to Religion, namely, That it is the Pleasure of the Mind, and that both, as it relates to Speculation, and is called the Understanding; and as it relates to Practice, and is called the Conscience.

2. The second ennobling property of it is, That it is such a Pleasure as never satiates or wearies: For it properly affects the Spirit, and a Spirit feels no weariness, as being priviledged from the causes of it. But can the Epicure say so of any of the Pleasures that he so much dotes upon? Do they not expire, while they satisfie? and after a few minutes refreshment, determine in loathing and unquietness? How short is the Interval between a Pleasure and a Burden! How undiscernable the Transition from one to the other! Pleasure dwells no longer upon the Appetite, then the necessities of Nature, which are quickly and easily provided for, and then all that follows, is a load and an oppression. Every morsel to a satisfied Hunger, is onely a new Labor to a tired Digestion. Every draught

to him that hath quencht his Thirſt, is but a further quenching of Nature; a proviſion for Rheums and Diſeaſes; a drowning of the quickneſs and activity of the Spirits.

He that prolongs his Meals, and ſacrifices his time aſwel as his other conveniences to his Luxury, how quickly does he out-ſit his Pleaſure? and then how is all the following time beſtowed upon Ceremony and Surfet? Till at length, after a long fatigue of Eating, and Drinking, and Babling, he concludes the great work of Dining Gentilely, and ſo makes a ſhift to riſe from Table, that he may lie down upon his Bed: Where, after he hath ſlept himſelf into ſome uſe of himſelf, by much ado he ſtaggers to his Table again, and there acts over the ſame Brutiſh Scene: So that he paſſes his whole life in a dozed condition between ſleeping, and waking, with a kinde of drouſineſs, and confuſion upon his Sences; which, what Pleaſure it can be, is hard to conceive; all that is of it, dwells upon the tip of his Tongue, and within the compaſs of his Palat: A worthy

thy prize for a man to purchaſe with the loſs of his Time, his Reaſon, and Himſelf?

Nor is that man leſs deceived, that thinks to maintain a conſtant tenure of Pleaſure, by a continual purſuit of Sports and Recreations: For it is moſt certainly true of all theſe things, That as they refreſh a man when he is weary, ſo they weary him when he is refreſhed: Which is an evident demonſtration, that God never deſigned the uſe of them to be continual, by putting ſuch an emptineſs in them, as ſhould ſo quickly fail and lurch the expectation.

The moſt voluptuous and looſe perſon breathing, were he but tied to follow his Hawks, and his Hounds, his Dice, and his Courtſhips every day, would finde it the greateſt torment and calamity that could befall him: He would flie to the *Mines* and the *Gallies* for his Recreation, and to the Spade and the Mattock for a diverſion from the miſery of a continual un-intermitted Pleaſure.

But on the contrary, the Providence of God hath ſo ordered the courſe of things, that there is no Action, whoſe uſefulneſs hath made it the matter of Duty, and of a Profeſſion, but a man may bear the continual purſuit of it, without Loathing or Satiety. The ſame Shop and Trade that employs a man in his youth, employs him alſo in his age. Every morning he riſes freſh to his Hammer and his Anvil, he paſſes the day ſinging; Cuſtom hath naturalized his labor to him: His Shop is his Element, and he cannot with any enjoyment of himſelf live out of it; whereas, no Cuſtom can make the painfulneſs of a debauch eaſie or pleaſing to a man, ſince nothing can be pleaſant that is unnatural. But now, if God hath interwoven ſuch a Pleaſure with the works of our ordinary calling; how much ſuperior and more refined muſt that be, that ariſes from the ſurvey of a pious and well-governed life! Surely, as much as Chriſtianity is nobler then a Trade.

And then, for the conſtant freſhneſs of it, it is ſuch a pleaſure as can never cloy or overwork the minde: For ſurely no man was ever weary

weary of *thinking*, muchleſs of thinking that he had done well or vertuouſly; that he had conquered ſuch and ſuch a temptation, or offered violence to any of his exorbitant deſires. This is a delight that grows and improves under thought and reflexion, and while it exerciſes, does alſo endear it ſelf to the Minde, at the ſame time imploying and inflaming the Meditations. All Pleaſures that affect the Body, muſt needs weary, becauſe they tranſport, and all Tranſportation is a Violence; and no Violence can be laſting, but determines upon the falling of the Spirits, which are not able to keep up that height of motion, that the Pleaſure of the Senſes raiſes them to. And therefore how inevitably does an immoderate laughter end in a ſigh? which is onely Natures recovering it ſelf after a force done to it. But the Religious Pleaſure of a well diſpoſed minde, moves gently, and therefore conſtantly; it does not affect by Rapture and Extaſie, but is like the Pleaſure of Health, which is ſtill and ſober, yet greater and ſtronger, then thoſe that *call up* the Senſes, with

with groſſer and more affecting impreſſions. God hath given no man a Body as ſtrong as his Appetites; but hath corrected the Boundleſſneſs of his Voluptuous deſires, by ſtinting his ſtrengths, and contracting his Capacities.

But to look upon thoſe pleaſures alſo, that have an higher object than the Body; as thoſe that ſpring from honour and grandeur of condition; yet we ſhall find, that even theſe are not ſo freſh and conſtant, but the Mind can nauſeate them, and quickly feel the thinneſs of a popular Breath. Thoſe that are ſo fond of Applauſe, while they purſue it, how little do they taſte it when they have it! Like lightning, it only flaſhes upon the face and is gone, and it is well if it does not hurt the man. But for greatneſs of Place; though it is fit and neceſſary, that ſome perſons in the world ſhould be in love with a ſplendid ſervitude, yet certainly they muſt be much beholding to their own fancy, that they can be pleaſed at it. For he that riſes up early, and goes to bed late, only to receive Addreſſes, to read and anſwer Petitions, is really as much tied and abridged in his freedom, as he that waits all

that

that time to preſent one. And what Pleaſure can it be to be encumbred with Dependances, thronged and ſurrounded with Petitioners? and thoſe perhaps ſometimes all Suitors for the ſame thing: whereupon all but one will be ſure to depart grumbling, becauſe they miſs of what they think their due: and even that *one* ſcarce thankful, becauſe he thinks he hath no more than his due. In a word, if it is a Pleaſure to be envied and ſhot at, to be maligned *ſtanding*, and to be deſpiſed *falling*, to endeavour that which is impoſſible, which is to pleaſe all, and to ſuffer for not doing it; then is it a pleaſure to be great, and to be able to diſpoſe of mens fortunes and preferments.

But further to proceed from hence, to yet an higher degree of Pleaſure, indeed the higheſt on this ſide that of Religion; which is the pleaſure of Friendſhip and Converſation. Friendſhip muſt confeſſedly be allowed, the Top, the Flower, and Crown of all Temporal enjoyments. Yet hath not this alſo its flaws, and its dark ſides? For is not my Friend a Man, and

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is not Friendſhip ſubject to the ſame Mortality and Change that men are ? And in caſe a man loves, and is not loved again, doth he not think that he hath cauſe to hate as heartily, and ten times more eagerly then ever he loved ? and then *to be* an Enemy, and once to *have bin* a Friend, does it not embitter the Rupture, and aggravate the Calamitie ? But admitting that my Friend continues ſo to the end ; yet in the mean time, is he all Perfection, all Vertue, and Diſcretion ? Hath he not *humours* to be endured, as well as *kindneſſes* to be enjoyed ? And am I ſure to ſmell the Roſe, without ſometimes feeling the Thorn ?

And then laſtly for Company ; though it may *Reprieve* a man from his Melancholy, yet it cannot ſecure him from his Conſcience, nor from ſometimes being alone. And what is all that a man enjoyes, from a weeks, a months, or a years converſe, comparable to what he feels for one hour, when his Conſcience ſhall take him aſide, and rate him by himſelf !

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In ſhort, run over the whole Circle of all Earthly Pleaſures, and I dare affirm, That had not God ſecured a man a ſolid Pleaſure from his own Actions, after he had rolled from one to another, and enjoyed them all, he would be forced to complain, That either they were not indeed Pleaſures, or that Pleaſure was not Satisfaction.

3. The third ennobling property of the Pleaſure that accrews to a man from Religion, is, That it is ſuch an one as is in no bodies power, but onely in his that hath it: So that he that hath the Propriety, may be alſo ſure of the Perpetuity. And tell me ſo of any outward enjoyment, that Mortality is capable of. We are generally at the mercy of Mens Rapine, Avarice, and Violence, whether we ſhall be happy, or no: For if I build my Felicity upon my Eſtate or Reputation, I am happy as long as the Tyrant, or the Railer will give me leave to be ſo; but when my concernments take up no more room or compaſs then my ſelf, then ſo long as I know where to breathe and to exiſt, I know alſo where to be happy: For I know I may be ſo

in my own Breaſt, in the Court of my own Conſcience, where, if I can but prevail with my ſelf *to be* Innocent, I need bribe neither Judge nor Officer to be *pronounced* ſo. The Pleaſure of the Religious Man, is an eaſie and a portable Pleaſure; ſuch an one as he carries about in his boſome, without alarming either the Eye or Envy of the World. A Mans putting all his Pleaſures into this one, is like a Travellers putting all his Goods into one Jewel: The value is the ſame, and the convenience greater.

There is nothing that can raiſe a Man to that generous abſoluteneſs of condition, as neither to cringe, to fawn, or to depend meanly; but that which gives him that happineſs within himſelf, for which men depend upon others: For ſurely, I need ſalute no great Mans Threſhold, ſneak to none of his Friends or Servants, to ſpeak a good word for me to my Conſcience. It is a noble, and a ſure defiance of a great Malice, backed with a great Intereſt; which yet can have no advantage of a Man, but from his own expectations of ſomething that is without himſelf:

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But if I can make my duty my delight; if I feaſt, and pleaſe, and careſs my minde with the Pleaſures of worthy Speculations, or vertuous practices, let greatneſs and malice vex and abridge me, if they can; my Pleaſures are as free as my Will; no more to be controlled then my choice, or the unlimitted range of my thoughts and my deſires.

Nor is this kinde of Pleaſure onely out of the reach of any outward violence; but even thoſe things alſo that make a much cloſer impreſſion upon us, which are the irreſiſtible decays of Nature, have yet no influence at all upon this. For when Age it ſelf, which of all things in the World, will not be baffled or defied, ſhall begin to arreſt, ſeiſe, and reminde us of our Mortality, by Pains, Aches, Deadneſs of Limbs, and Dulneſs of Sences; yet then the Pleaſure of the Minde, ſhall be in its full youth, vigor, and freſhneſs. A Palſie may as well ſhake an Oak, or a Feaver dry up a Fountain, as either of them ſhake, dry up, or impair the delight of Conſcience; for it lies within, it centers in the Heart, it grows into the very ſubſtance of

the Soul: So that it accompanies a Man to his Grave. He never out-lives it, and that for this cauſe onely, Becauſe he cannot out-live himſelf.

And thus I have endeavored to deſcribe the excellency of that *Pleaſure* that is to be found in the *Ways* of a *Religious Wiſdom*, by thoſe excellent properties that do attend it; which, whether they reach the Deſcription that hath been given them, or no, every man may convince himſelf, by the beſt of Demonſtrations, which is his own tryal.

Now, from all this Diſcourſe, this I am ſure is a moſt natural and direct conſequence, That if the *Ways of Religion* are *Ways of Pleaſantneſs*, then thoſe that are not *Ways of Pleaſantneſs*, are not truly and properly *Ways of Religion*. Upon which ground, it is eaſie to ſee what judgment is to be paſſed upon all thoſe affected, uncommanded, abſurd Auſterities, ſo much prized and exerciſed by ſome of the *Romiſh* Profeſſion. Pilgrimages, going Bare-foot, Hair-ſhirts, and Whips, with other ſuch Goſpel-Artillery, are their onely helps to devotion. Things never enjoyned,

either

either by the Prophets under the Jewiſh, or by the Apoſtles under the Chriſtian Oeconomy; who, yet ſurely, underſtood the proper, and the moſt efficacious Inſtruments of Piety, as well as any Confeſſor or Friar of all the Order of St. *Francis*, or any Caſuiſt whatſoever.

It ſeems, that with them, a Man ſometimes cannot be a Penitent, unleſs he alſo turns Vagabond, and foots it to *Jeruſalem*, or wanders over this or that part of the World, to viſit the ſhrine of ſuch or ſuch a pretended Saint; though perhaps in his life, ten times more ridiculous then themſelves: Thus, that which was *Cains* curſe, is become their Religion. He that thinks to expiate a ſin, by going barefoot, does the pennance of a Gooſe, and onely makes one Folly the atonement of another. *Paul* indeed was ſcourged and beaten by the Jews, but we never read, that he beat or ſcourged himſelf; and if they think *that his keeping under of his body* imports ſo much, they muſt firſt prove, That the Body cannot be kept under by a vertuous Minde, and that the Minde cannot be made vertuous, but by a ſcourge; and conſequently, that *Thongs* and *Whipcord* are

are means of Grace, and things neceſſary to Salvation. The truth is, if Mens Religion lies no deeper then their skin, it is poſſible, that they may ſcourge themſelves into very great improvements. But they will finde that *Bodily exerciſe* touches not the Soul; and that neither Pride, nor Luſt, nor Covetouſneſs, nor any other Vice was ever Mortifyed by Corporal Diſciplines: it is not the Back, but the Heart that muſt bleed for ſin: and conſequently, that in this whole courſe they are like men out of their way; let them ſlaſh on never ſo faſt, they are not at all the nearer to their journyes end: and however they deceive themſelves and others, they may as well expect to bring a Cart, as a Soul to Heaven, by ſuch means. What Arguments they have to beguile poor ſimple, unſtable Souls with, I know not; but ſurely the Practical Caſuiſtical, that is, the Principal, Vital part of their Religion ſavours very little of Spirituality.

And now upon the reſult of all, I ſuppoſe that to exhort men to be Religious, is only in other words to exhort them to take their Pleaſure. A Pleaſure High, Rational, and Angelical;

gelical; a Pleaſure, embaſed with no appendant ſting, no conſequent Loathings, no Remorſes, or bitter farewels. But ſuch an one, as being Honey in the Mouth, never turns to Gall or Gravell in the Belly. A Pleaſure made for the Soul, and the Soul for that; ſuitable to its Spirituality, and equal to all its Capacities. Such an one as grows freſher upon Enjoyment, and though continually Fed upon, yet is never Devoured. A Pleaſure that a Man may call as properly his own, as his Soul and his Conſcience; neither lyable to Accident, nor expoſed to Injury. It is the fore-taſte of Heaven, and the Earneſt of Eternity. In a word, it is ſuch an one, as being begun in Grace, paſſes into Glory, Bleſſedneſs and Immortality, and thoſe Pleaſures *that neither Eye has ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor has it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive.*

To which God of his Mercy vouchſafe to bring us all: to whom be rendred and aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Praiſe, Might, Majeſty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

FINIS.